

Original Paper

Discipline Construction and Practical Reflection during the Founding of the CPC

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Abstract

At the beginning of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Party explored discipline construction in early times for dealing with the unprofessional and corrupt CPC members and the unregulated organizational discipline. Although this action was immature, it still reflects the practical wisdom based on ideological construction, guaranteed by the measure of targeted treatment.

Keywords

Discipline Construction, the Founding of the CPC, Practical Reflection

1. Introduction

There is no doubt that discipline construction is a core project for the Party to implement self-revolution, keep people-center in the advancement of the great new project of Party building. As this reason, against the backdrop of the centenary of the Party, it is an agency to looking back its history and reflecting from it.

1.1 The Overview of the Discipline Construction during the CPC

Initially, the CPC witnessed many thoughts, such as behavior in disregard of the rules, the anarchism, populism, reformism, syndicalism, etc. Facing the contradictory between politic thoughts and organizations, some the CPC members have no unremitting faith in communism and Marxism from the bottom line in despite of joining the CPC. Meanwhile, community-level Party organization still in its infancy with unregulated basic system, failing to held in a planned and organized manner in accordance with regulations. Between the management of grass-roots Party organizations and the unsettled faith, some Party members were more inclined to lose their stances because of obscure sense of discipline.

These problems were sharply attracted by the leaders in the CPC. From July to August 1921, the 1st National Congress of the CPC adopted the first Party's programme and the first resolution of the CPC, which clearly demonstrated the courage of the Party against the undesirable phenomena and

self-targeted revolution. Although there are only 15 articles (of which Article 11 is missing), a total of over 900 words, the First Programme of the CPC plays the role of the provisional Party Constitution, involving many aspects of discipline construction. Thereinto, Articles 3 and 4 emphasize that Party members should sever ties with other parties that oppose the Party's programme. Article 6 stipulates that Party members shall keep secrets. Article 10 rules that Party members shall be subject to the supervision of local executive committees. And Article 14 stipulates that Party members shall not be allowed to serve as members of the government or members of Parliament without permission (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 2015). The "First Program of the CPC" has shown the consciousness of the "purpose supervision, discipline supervision and organizational supervision" of the CPC, and thus becomes the "starting point" of the intra-Party supervision mechanism (Wu, 2012).

In July 1922, the Second National Congress of the CPC, based on the First Program of the CPC and the new Party Constitution formulated by the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of Russia in March 1919, enacted the Constitution of the CPC ("the Party Constitution") firstly. The Party Constitution is divided into six chapters and twenty-nine articles, among which the fourth chapter specifically explains "discipline", with a total of nine articles, and the text length accounts for about 1/3 of the whole Party Constitution. As for the content of the articles, Article 17 clarifies the highest organ of the Party. Articles 18 to 21 are related to the policy obedience and order execution of Party organizations and Party members. Articles 22 to 23 stipulate regulations that Party members join and leave organizations and take office in the government. And Article 24 defines the principle that the minority is subordinate to the majority. It is worth noting that Article 25 firstly puts forward six rigid requirements on Party members' thoughts, words and deeds from the perspective of punishment for violating regulations. In the fifth content, it is mentioned that Party members, who still "do not correct their mistakes", must be expelled from the Party after the expiration finished, which is the concentrated of the Party's ideological construction as the main content of discipline construction at this stage (Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, etc., 2014, p. 28). The other contents of Article 25 are also specific provisions for the punishment of Party members' ideological problems. The increase of the provisions in the Party Constitution on discipline construction shows that the Party has gradually accumulated experience in discipline construction, while the improvement of relevant provisions presents that the Party's thoughts on discipline construction has begun to change. On the whole, compared with the First Program of the CPC, the orientation of the Party Constitution in discipline construction is clearer and more operational. Besides, many provisions on discipline can be found in other resolutions enacted by the Second National Congress of the CPC. For example, the Resolution on the Accession of the CPC to the Third International provides for democratic centralization, and the Resolution on the Constitution of the Communist Party emphasizes "disciplined organization and training" (Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, etc., 2014, p. 16, p. 25). Thus the CPC

attached greater importance to discipline construction after a year's practice of revolutionary struggle. In June 1923, the First Amendment to the Constitution of the CPC enacted by the Third National Congress of the CPC, mainly revised the procedures for joining the Party in Article 2 of Chapter 1 of the Party Constitution, and changed the introducer of joining the Party from one to two, thus improving the procedures for joining the Party. Remarkably, this revision also adds the content of the discipline of leaving the Party for the first time, emphasizing that even if Party members leave the Party organization, they must strictly observe the Party's secrets (Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, etc., 2014, p. 17). In addition, the Resolution on Organizational Issues passed at the Third National Congress of the CPC has further improved the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and enhanced the ability of the Party organization to manage and supervise Party members.

The revision of the Party Constitution and the adoption of the Articles of Association reflect the gradual enrichment of the Party's discipline construction. However, in this period, looking at the whole Party, there was no special document on discipline construction issued from the central government to the local government, and no functional department with discipline construction as its main task was established. The force of the Party in discipline construction was still relatively weak. Specifically:

On the one hand, the Party's discipline construction lacked a strong and specialized intra-Party supervision subject. The main organizational forms of the Party in this period include the Central Executive Committee, the Local Executive Committee and the Party Branch, and the management form of intra-Party affairs was a vertical management structure from the central to the local. It was not until the Fourth National Congress of the CPC that our Party formally proposed to regard the Party branch as the grass-roots organization, expanding the influence of the Party at the grass-roots. Nevertheless, Party organizations at all levels had never been able to set up special departments to take charge of discipline construction work, which led to more discipline problems and reflects that the Party was still not mature enough in discipline construction in this period.

On the other hand, the Party's discipline construction lacked strict and strong discipline regulations. Having strong punishment will achieve equivalent effect, or will greatly reduce its effect. Whether it is the "Party Constitution" or the "First Amendment to the Articles of Association" and other documents, the punishment for Party members' violation of discipline is "dismissal", which can only affect the political identity of Party members at most, but will not cause more pressure on Party members to obey discipline. Therefore, in the absence of strong punishment, it is extremely difficult to realize better discipline construction through limited provisions in the "Party Constitution".

2. The Practical Reflection During the Founding of CPC

Looking back at the history of discipline construction during the founding of the CPC, our Party has continuously purified the intra-Party political ecology through discipline construction with the courage of self-revolution. Although it has not perfect, a unique practical wisdom in discipline construction has

shown and planted the seeds of our Party's discipline construction.

2.1 The Foundation of Ideological Construction

Ideological construction is the cornerstone of the Party's project and the foundation of the Party's discipline construction. It means that our Party continues to carry out the re-study and re-education of Marxism, constantly arming the whole Party with the thought of scientific socialism, and making the whole Party establish an unswerving belief in communist politics. Ideological construction is a basic premise to strengthen the cohesion, force and reputation of our Party organization. It not only improves our Party's collective image and enhances political reputation, but also reduces the cost of discipline construction and optimizes the efficiency of discipline construction.

The Party already had the consciousness of ideological construction at the beginning. In 1921, the First Program of the CPC clearly stipulated that joining the CPC must "recognize the program and policies of the Party". This clearly points out that "joining the Party with thought" is the basic premise for becoming CPC members (Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, etc., 2015, p. 5). Looking at the experience of the later development of our Party organization, "joining the Party with thought" has not only become the primary yardstick for absorbing Party members, but also become the key factor affecting the subsequent performance of Party members. Those who have absolute identity and confidence in the Party's beliefs, theories and propositions, they can support the Party's program, abide by the Party's discipline and stick to the Party's regulations after joining it. However, those who have impure motives for joining the Party and do not have a deep degree of thinking about joining the Party will inevitably violate the Party's discipline, give up their political ideals, broke away from and even rebel against the Party in the revolutionary course of our Party. This objectively determines that it is not enough to just "join the Party with thought", and the development and growth of the Party also needs continuous deepening of "Party building in thought". Chen Gongbo and Zhou Fohai, two representatives of the CPC, strip down relations with the Party, which testify against that our Party should persistently carry out ideological Party building in discipline construction.

During the founding of the CPC, the ideological construction focused on the construction of political beliefs, the deepening of political cognition and the purification of political thoughts, and constantly constructed the soft moral power of Party members to regulate their self-actions. History has witnessed that the ideological Party building pioneered in the course of the founding of the Party has played a fundamental supporting role in the Party building, especially the discipline construction. In the current period when the world has never changed greatly in a hundred years, we should inherit and spread the historical tradition of ideological Party building, continue to push forward the "soul-casting project" of the CPC, firmly establish "political consciousness, overall situation consciousness, core consciousness and conformity consciousness", and constantly construct in the field of ideological and political like the Great Wall forcibly.

2.2 *The Key of System Construction*

System is the precipitation of collective rationality and the crystallization of group wisdom. It not only establishes the principle of well-ordered organization, but also forms the insurmountable rules of the organization members. The irreplaceable value of the system makes our Party pay great attention to the system construction at the beginning of its founding, and regards it as a fundamental, overall and long-term key issue concerning the success or failure of discipline construction.

Since its establishment, our Party has attached great importance to the institutionalization of discipline construction. In 1921, the birth of “Constitution of the CPC” clearly defined the Party’s organizational principles and disciplines. In 1922, the adoption of the Constitution of the CPC stipulated the Party’s leadership system, organizational principles and organizational discipline in depth and detail, and laid the cornerstone of China’s system construction. In 1923, the First Amendment to the Constitution of the CPC was enacted, which continued to institutionalize the procedures for joining the Party and the organizational construction of the Party. With the publication of the Resolution on the Third Amendment of the Articles of Association of the CPC, the institutionalized construction of our Party in organizational discipline, political discipline, speech discipline and behavior discipline has improved. Meanwhile, our Party has also issued particular discipline construction documents such as the Circular, which makes the Party’s discipline construction reflect the characteristics of top-level design and meticulous mapping.

However, due to the influence of the international situation and the insurmountable youth in the organizational growth period, our Party has never been able to establish a mature system in discipline construction during the Cultural Revolution. As some scholars have put, “During this period, many laws and regulations formulated by the Party were not perfect and mature, and there are some defects, such as being deeply influenced by the Soviet Union or the Communist International, unclear boundaries between laws and regulations documents and non-laws documents, irregular revision procedures of laws and regulations, and non-compliance with laws” (Zhu, 2015).

2.3 *The Measure of Targeted Treatment*

The discipline construction of the CPC itself stems from intra-Party discipline problems and its resolutions. The “problem orientation” of the early discipline construction of the CPC results in the measure of “targeted treatment”. This means that “disciplinary problems” should be dealt with a “precise treatment”. The implementation of “targeted treatment” makes our Party’s early discipline construction show the trend of combining the top-level design of the Party Constitution with the targeted precision of treatment, manifesting distinct reality, practicality and pertinence in Party’s system construction and institutional operation. In the early revolutionary course of our Party, when the number of Party members increased sharply, there were also some egoistic phenomena such as abuse of power, corruption and harming the public. In the infiltration of power, some Party members also have deep-rooted bureaucratic problems, which are divorced from the masses gradually. Faced with such a situation, the Second National Congress of the CPC enacted the “Decision on Parliamentary Action”,

requiring Party members to understand the current concerns, demands and difficulties of the masses without delay. Our Party has repeatedly stressed that the prerequisite of the Party's advanced development is to rely on the public, improve ties with the public and consciously accept the supervision of the public. Only achieve this, all kinds of corruption problems could be uncovered and cut off under the supervision of people.

The reason why the Party's discipline problems should be constantly grasped because discipline problems are always easy to recur in spite of heavy anti-corruption. Many problems in the development of the Party organizations during the founding of the CPC, such as arrogance of power, selfishness and rent-seeking. Facing various looming traditional or new discipline problems, the Party should develop "problem-oriented" discipline construction to solve various traditional and new discipline problems, normalizing targeted treatment and bone scraping to cure poison by constantly strengthening ideological construction, theoretical construction, discipline inspection system and institutional construction. In other words, at present, the Party's discipline construction should continue along the former way to constantly utilize the technology of scientific and technological revolution, promoting the intra-Party discipline construction to keep pace with the times. Especially in the current technological era of big data, China should make full use of the digital advantages of information technology to discover and warn various disciplinary problems and then eliminate corruption.

3. Conclusion

The CPC is a Marxist political Party wholeheartedly serving the people. The key to rely closely on the people is discipline construction, which deserves the Party's attention. At the beginning of the founding of the CPC, faced with the problems of uneven Party members, softening of Party members' faiths and corruption and disobedience, our Party implemented discipline construction from the aspects of ideological construction, system building, organizational development, bringing overwhelming obvious theoretical and practical accomplishments. Throughout the Party's discipline construction in its founding, democratic centralism, the political wisdom of power supervision and the close to the people were clearly embodied. However, although this paper combs, refines and reflects on the course and practice of discipline construction during the founding period of the CPC, the interweaving interaction of ideological construction, theoretical construction, system construction and institutional construction in the early discipline construction of the Party is still a major problem worthy of further consideration.

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